

Abstract

A method of near real time assembly of personalized playlists wherein a limited number of broadcast streams of programming content are assembled into a much larger number of unique playlists. The broadcast streams are available to the user by means of the Internet or other wired or wireless data system, from within or without a cooperative network. Component items from the broadcast streams are buffered at or near a user and identified for potential use as substitutes in a base channel selected by the user. The candidate substitute items are not identified to the user unless and until they are actually played in the personalized playlist. A unique personalized playlist is locally assembled for the user from generic publicly available streams while no uniquely originated stream is required. A customizer directs the assembly of the playlist according to one or both of the preferences of the user, and the style of a station that streams a base channel from which the personal playlist may be assembled. Locally stored content from a CD or other digital media may be used as a source for substitutions in the base channel. The major content of the personalized playlist need not be stored with the user, thus conserving memory resources. The distinct items of the playlist are not individually searchable by the user, remaining unidentified to the user unless they are actually played. In the case of music playlists, minimal local storage and searchability help conform to recording industry rules that discourage searching and downloading of content.